

# RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS IN MARYLAND

• Mr. SARBANES. Madam President, I am proud to recognize the four schools throughout Maryland that were selected as Blue Ribbon School Award winners in 2002. These schools are among only 172 schools nationwide to be honored with this award, the most prestigious national school recognition for public and private schools.

According to the Department of Education, Blue Ribbon Schools have been judged to be particularly effective in meeting local, state and national goals. These schools also display the qualities that are necessary to prepare our young people for the challenges that will face our nation in the years to come. Blue Ribbon status is awarded to schools which have strong leadership; a school community with a clear vision and shared sense of mission; high-quality teaching; a challenging and up-to-date curriculum; policies and practices that ensure a safe and learning conducive environment; a solid commitment to family involvement; evidence that the school helps students achieve high standards; and a commitment to share best practices with other schools.

The designation as a Blue Ribbon School is a ringing endorsement of the successful practices that enable the students of these schools to succeed and achieve. After a screening process by appropriate state and local departments, the Blue Ribbon School nominations were forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education. A panel of outstanding educators from around the country then reviewed the nominations, selected schools for site visits, and made recommendations to the Secretary of Education.

Over the past few years, I have tried to visit Blue Ribbon Schools in my State and have always been delighted to witness the strong interaction between parents, teachers, and the community, a characteristic shared by all of these successful schools. As I carry out my visits, I look forward to personally congratulating the students, teachers and staff for achieving this exceptional accomplishment.

The four winning Maryland schools are:

Our Lady of Good Counsel, located in Montgomery County, is an outstanding example of a school willing to go to great lengths to prepare its students for higher education. Good Counsel prides itself on the quality of its academic offerings, faculty, students, and unique community spirit. In an effort to ensure all students are college-ready, Good Counsel undertook an immense mission when it established the Ryken Program: a college preparatory program for motivated students with learning disabilities. Unique to Good Counsel, compared to other private schools in the metro area, is its progressive integration of technology into the classroom, including three state-of-the-art computer labs, seven departmental technology rooms, and a laptop

in each classroom. The successes that Good Counsel graduates find in college and careers attest to the school's overall excellence.

Phillips School, Laurel, has been a staple of special education, providing services to students with a variety of learning, emotional, and behavioral disorders for over 30 years. Phillips School greets the challenge of teaching children with special needs with open arms, addressing not only the needs of the student, but the needs of the family as well. The Phillips staff also includes related service personnel, so that working with students is a team effort and the needs of each and every student are addressed throughout the entire school day. By providing a program of education, family support services, community education and advocacy in a supportive environment, Phillips works hard to ensure its students will be able to succeed in the next stage of life.

Thomas Spriggs Wootton High, located in Montgomery County, is a public high school dedicated to college preparedness and high student motivation. Established in 1970, Wootton has a long history of excellence in academics and student participation. Wootton strives to create an exceptional learning environment supporting pride and achievement. Student involvement has been one of the primary focuses at Wootton in recent years, encouraging students not only to participate in school activities themselves, but also to lead others. Historically, 90 percent of Wootton graduates go on to attend college. This statistic is a direct reflection of the school wide dedication of Wootton staff to work with all students to support and ensure their success. As Wootton's enrollment and diversity expand, it continues its dedication to ensuring all students excel.

Windsor Knolls Middle School, located in Frederick County, is a public middle school embodying a challenging, multifaceted learning community. Their strong commitment to success is easily demonstrated by student statistics, high scores on the CRES tests, Maryland Functional tests, CTBS, and MSPAP tests. However, a better understanding of the excellence at Windsor Knolls can be gained by observing students. They are consistently immersed into a world of education through programs involving cultural awareness, character education, community interaction, and many other groundbreaking programs. These techniques and outstanding dedication by the community are key to Windsor Knolls' consistent success.

Again, I congratulate all of the students, teachers and parents from these outstanding schools for receiving the National Blue Ribbon School Award. It is a well-deserved tribute to their dedication and enthusiasm for learning. As the school year closes, I wish all of them an enriching and restful summer and continued success in the future.●

# DRAFT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION ENTITLED "HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002"—PM 92

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Government Affairs:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I hereby transmit to the Congress proposed legislation to create a new Cabinet Department of Homeland Security.

Our Nation faces a new and changing threat unlike any we have faced before—the global threat of terrorism. No nation is immune, and all nations must act decisively to protect against this constantly evolving threat.

We must recognize that the threat of terrorism is a permanent condition, and we must take action to protect America against the terrorists that seek to kill the innocent.

Since September 11, 2001, all levels of government and leaders from across the political spectrum have cooperated like never before. We have strengthened our aviation security and tightened our borders. We have stockpiled medicines to defend against bioterrorism and improved our ability to combat weapons of mass destruction. We have dramatically improved information sharing among our intelligence agencies, and we have taken new steps to protect our critical infrastructure.

Our Nation is stronger and better prepared today than it was on September 11. Yet, we can do better. I propose the most extensive reorganization of the Federal Government since the 1940s by creating a new Department of Homeland Security. For the first time we would have a single Department whose primary mission is to secure our homeland. Soon after the Second World War, President Harry Truman recognized that our Nation's fragmented military defenses needed reorganization to help win the Cold War. President Truman proposed uniting our military forces under a single entity, now the Department of Defense, and creating the National Security Council to bring together defense, intelligence, and diplomacy. President Truman's reforms are still helping us to fight terror abroad, and today we need similar dramatic reforms to secure our people at home.

President Truman and Congress reorganized our Government to meet a very visible enemy in the Cold War. Today our nation must once again reorganize our Government to protect against an often-invisible enemy, an enemy that hides in the shadows and an enemy that can strike with many different types of weapons. Our enemies seek to obtain the most dangerous and deadly weapons of mass destruction and use them against the innocent. While we are winning the war on terrorism, Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations still have thousands of trained